Code # 465

NEW JERSEY

**2000-2001
Guidelines and
Application**
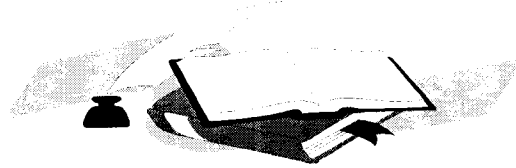
BEST

PRACTICES

Category	**Language Arts Literacy** _(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)_
Practice Name	**Students Reaching Students Through Reading**
Number of Schools with Practice	**1** (If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	Sussex
District (Proper Name)	Kittatinny Regional High School
Address	77 Halsey Road Newton, New Jersey 07860
Telephone	(973) 383-1800 Fax (973) 383-4392 Email *rwalker@krhs.net*
Chief School Administrator	Mr. Robert G. Walker
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	**Kittatinny Regional High School**
Address	77 Halsey Road Newton, New Jersey 07860
Telephone	(973) 383-1800 Fax (973) 383-4392 Email *skappler@krhs.net*
Principal	Mrs. Susan C. Kappler
Program Developer(s)	Loretta Radulic
Application Prepared By	Loretta Radulic
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY

Approved: _X_ Yes ___ No   County Superintendent's Signature

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2000-2001 APPLICATION

Application Requirements: Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application:

1. **RESPONSES to information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS and ACCURATE.** No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements.

2. **USE ONLY SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable) and 4.** Do not include any additional materials as they will not be reviewed in selection process.

3. Application must be **keyboarded on 8 ½" x 11" white paper, portrait** format. **Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewriter font** must be used. (This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.)

4. **KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to the statements below must be **no more than a total of four pages. Keyboard the statement followed by the response** . Format your response for accuracy and clarity.

5. The information on page 4 and the responses to statements must be copied **on one side of the page. The** information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied **on one side of the page.** Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4 and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.

6. The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.

7. The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by November 27, 2000, with the Itemized List of District Applications form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the copy containing the original signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:

Type of School

_____ Elementary School

_____ Middle School

_____ Junior High School

__x__ High School

_____ Other: _____

Grade Levels

_____

_____

_____

__9-12___.

_____

Practice Name ____ *Students Reaching Students* ____
_____ *Through Reading* _____

Number of Schools with Practice _____1_____

Number of Districts with Practice _____1_____

Location ___ Urban/City ___ Suburban With Urban Characteristics

___ Suburban ___ Small City/Town __x_ Rural

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.

_____ Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)
_____ Assessment/Evaluation
_____ Bilingual Education and Diversity
_____ Citizenship/Character Education
_____ Early Childhood Education Programs
_____ Educational Support/Guidance
         and Counseling Programs

_____ Educational Technology
_____ Gifted and Talented Programs
_____ Health and Physical Education
__x__ Language Arts Literacy
_____ Mathematics
_____ Professional Development
_____ Public Engagement
         (family involvement and partnerships
         with business, community, school districts,
         and/or higher education)

_____ Safe Learning Environment
_____ School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
_____ Science
_____ Social Studies
_____ Special Education
_____ World Languages

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1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and lists its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards,* * addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met those needs.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at http://www.state.state.nj/us/education.

This practice, "*Students Reaching Students Through Reading*" is a three-week unit where students create a minimum of three children's stories with the best one to be read to first or second graders. Students read various children's books and discuss the elements that are needed for characterization, appropriate age-level dialogue, the development of conflict and resolution, and the importance of audience. Students are provided with a minimum of three "springboard" ideas to get them writing. For example, they may research an animal of their choice with information gathered becoming the basis of their story. Once these skills are understood, practiced and mastered through various rough drafts, students choose their best story. They meet in peer editing groups, conference with the teacher, and then bind their final version. After the "book" is finished, students practice reading to their peers. The rest of the class is coached to act as inquisitive first graders. The reader learns where to pause, ask questions, and how to return the audience's attention to the story. This process also develops into an innovative way to teach students the importance of public speaking and reading with emotion. We discuss tone of voice, posture, eye contact, and facial expressions. The hard copy story is the bridge that high school students use to reach the elementary students. The culminating event is their opportunity to share their original stories with students in the first or second grade.

The objectives of this practice are two-fold. The high school students will be able to:
- Read with feeling and enthusiasm.
- Share a joy of reading with the younger generation.
- Adjust a presentation to accommodate an audience and reinforce comprehension through dialoguing.
- Listen carefully and provide appropriate feedback.
- Serve as a positive influence and role model.
- Understand the connection between visual and verbal messages.
- Understand that writing affects behavior through immediate feedback.
- Have fun while learning.

The elementary students will be able to:
- Develop listening skills for comprehension.
- Respond to the verbal and visual messages.
- Share a story of their own.
- Have fun while learning.

In a time when there are so many negative influences on children, this practice is one way to show the elementary students that high school students are just like them. All of the students learn that writing, reading, and sharing ideas can expand a person's experience and bridge the gap between generations. This practice is a creative way to educate students how to teach other students. What they learn from each other is just as valid as what they learn from their teachers. Additionally, their writing is elevated to a higher level since it is no longer an assignment for a mere grade. Someone important will see it; someone who looks up to them. This creates pride in their work. They have a live audience with an opinion they are ready and willing to share.

Fortunately, we have five sending districts to our regional school and we are able to visit at least two. Since most teachers are enthusiastic about the idea of having positive role models in their classrooms, it is an easy task for a high school teacher to organize the event. When possible, the elementary school readings are scheduled to coincide with "*Love of Reading*" Week.

This practice addresses the problem of apathetic readers. It demonstrates that stories read with enthusiasm will be enthusiastically received. It breathes life into the students because they become the teachers and learn why teachers continue to teach. Teachers learn from their students and that is what makes it interesting and exciting. Often teachers ask students to read aloud. As an English teacher, I have heard numerous students read in a flat voice without understanding what they are saying and bringing little enthusiasm or life to the text. Additionally, all too often students sit at a desk and take notes based on a teacher's lecture or analysis of a text without thinking on their own. Somewhere along the way, high school students have forgotten that reading is fun, and it's enjoyable to share ideas about characters, plots, and places. With this practice, students become better readers and better speakers because they have a greater stake in it. They have a live audience who is in awe of them. Therefore, while the practice increases their opportunity to shine as a speaker and reader, it also lowers the intimidation factor that often accompanies speaking in front of peers.

This practice addresses several Core Curriculum Content Standards. The students speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences. Since they practice reading to their peers first before the elementary students (3.1 – 8, 10), they gain insight to the unique aspects of their story. They learn where to pause and ask questions and what to point out (3.1 – 12, 18). Therefore, the students must modify their speech in response to others (3.1 – 4). Since elementary school students are naturally inquisitive and can occasionally go off on tangents, the high school students must learn to draw them back to the story at hand. Therefore, they use listening, writing, and viewing to assist in speaking (3.1 – 1) and use speaking to influence other's behavior (3.1 – 3). When speaking in a situation that promotes interaction, a student will speak for a variety of purposes (3.2 – 3). A student must be able to address the young person's questions and show returned enthusiasm for their ideas. Since the high school students will have the opportunity to read before their classmates, feedback will be provided (3.2 – 9).

Since this practice begins in a single classroom before it branches out to include others, writing is the key factor. Students will write in concise and appropriate language for different purposes and audiences (3.3 – 4). They will write from experience, thoughts and feelings (3.3 – 2). Students will be given a minimum of three "story starters". One starter deals with a favorite stuffed animal. Students are asked to give detailed physical descriptions and focus on what makes their stuffed animal unique (3.3 – 7). In another starter, students will collect data on a particular animal and use facts to develop a child's story (3.3 – 8). Since all work is peer edited, the students revise with others (3.3 – 10).

In preparation for their reading debut, students must read a myriad of children's books (3.4 – 2). This activity helps them gain insight in developing a plot line, character, and setting. It reinforces the need for conflict and resolution to keep an audience interested (3.4 – 7). Additionally, since students have the opportunity to reminisce about their favorite childhood stories, they learn to identify common human aspects about themselves and the characters they grew to love (3.4 – 9, 18). This part of the practice also allows them to understand the different purposes of writing (3.4 – 3). Since the practice focuses on children's stories, illustrations are important. Although not every student is an artist, nearly everyone can make an attempt or piece together computer-generated illustrations. After discussing how an illustration can support text, students decide which pictures are best suited for their stories (3.5 – 1,6). They bring these ideas to their peer group and elicit feedback. Students must also organize their time and use their best personal skills to obtain an artist or try to become one themselves (3.5 – 4).

This practice meets several educational needs not always addressed in a regular classroom setting. It reinforces work ethics, dependability, the importance of getting along with others, and demonstrates the need of personal skills. All of these meet the Workplace Readiness Standards.

3. Describe educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

This practice is assessed in a multitude of ways. Students are initially assessed for the completion of class activities, such as completing story starters and researching an animal. Additionally, students are quizzed on proper punctuation of dialogue. These are traditional assessment methods completed by the teacher. However, on their final projects, students are assessed in three ways:

- The first is a self-assessment which students complete by using the rubric below. This is the same rubric that is used to assess students' original stories. The final part of this self- assessment comes in the form of a friendly competition. The students arrange their books around the room. After reading the stories, they vote on their favorites. They write a paragraph why that book should be the winner of the friendly competition and submit it to the teacher who gathers the information and leads a discussion on why the winner has audience appeal. The winners are listed and all books are put on display in a display case near the cafeteria for a month or two.

- The next assessment is the presentation. Since the culminating activity is reading to elementary students, the high school students need to be prepared to read to a group. After reviewing what makes a good presenter, they read to their peers in class. The class is coached to act as "well-behaved" elementary students. The presenter must make eye contact, read with enthusiasm, pausing occasionally to embellish or make a reference, face his/her audience, and handle questions appropriately. The teacher, as well as several students, will use a rubric to respond to the presentation. Additionally, the student presenting does a self evaluation. Using various forms of assessment allows all students to grow from the experience. This practice is not completed just to obtain a grade or figure out what the teacher wants. Since students must complete self evaluations, it increases the desire to do well. Additionally, the grades build upon their learning. The initial grades are used as building blocks towards their final grade (which is weighed more heavily). Therefore, the initial forms of assessment are used as a guide to help a student improve before their final presentation to the elementary students.

- The final assessment occurs after they meet with the elementary students. The elementary students usually send thank-you notes to them. In these notes are the responses of the elementary students who write about their favorite characters or incidents in the story. Although this is not a formal assessment, it lends validity to the work of the high school students. It reinforces a positive feeling that someone has heard and enjoyed their original story.

(SAMPLE RUBRIC) ASSESSMENT FOR ORIGINAL CHILDREN'S STORY

ASSESSMENT	1	2	3	4	5
PLOT LINE: Has a catchy opening, the plot develops logically, all complications are solved, the conclusion is satisfactory.					
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: All characters are distinguishable from each other. Various methods are used to develop characters. The main character is fully developed.					
USE OF DIALOGUE: Style of dialogue fits the character. Dialogue is used to development the character or move the plot along.					
PUNCTUATION OF DIALOGUE: All dialogue is punctuated correctly. It is indented every time the speaker changes.					
ILLUSTRATIONS: Illustrations add to meaning of story. Effort in illustrating is obvious.					
GENERAL:					
The book has an appropriate and catchy title.					
The cover includes all the necessary information.					
The title page includes all the necessary information.					
The presentation of the story is neat, original, and creative					
All spelling and grammar is correct.					

Since this is a practice that promotes reading skills, builds self esteem, and supports students teaching students, it is enthusiastically received by teachers. To replicate this practice, it is necessary to contact elementary school teachers prior to the unit so that there is enough time to arrange the culminating event. Time constraints, elementary school specials, and organization of the event all need to be discussed and planned.

The unit begins with the students sharing memories of their favorite childhood stories. After some are read, students discuss what made the stories memorable. Then, students review the elements of characterization and plot development. A major focus in this unit is the development of character through dialogue. We explore how people of different ages and different backgrounds speak and determine how this information can be used to establish a character.

The students are given at least three "springboards" from which to create their stories. One story will teach a moral or a lesson that they learned as a child. Another story "springs" from a favorite childhood stuffed animal. The last story has its roots in research. Students collect data on an animal about which they know very little. Their story is formed through the data they gather.

After peer editing and teacher conferences, each student chooses one of their rough drafts to polish. This story then goes through the various revising stages. Once the student is satisfied, he/she creates a hard-covered book.

Collectively, students are coached to act like enthusiastic, yet well-behaved first and second graders. At the same time, each student will learn to read with enthusiasm, pause to answer questions and point out significant elements of his/her story, and return the group's focus to the storybook.

When the high school students travel to the elementary schools (we usually only make it to two of the five sending districts), they are grouped and brought into several classrooms. In the classrooms, they each read to five or six children for about fifteen minutes. Then, they switch and read to another group.

The enthusiastic classroom discussion that follows the event makes it all worthwhile. Fortunately, they can "re-live" the experience when the elementary students send their thank-you notes. Bringing home a child's note professing how much they enjoyed a character or an event oftentimes surpasses bringing home an abstract grade.